

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method of reserving a space from among a plurality
2 of spaces at a location, said method comprising the steps
3 of:

4 inputting a reservation request into a reservation
5 system for said location via a graphical user interface
6 (GUI), said reservation request including date and time
7 information;

8 providing an electronic payment for a selected
9 reservation period corresponding to said reservation
10 request; and

11 receiving, in response to said providing step, a
12 reservation coupon, which includes an identifying bar
13 code.

1 2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of visibly displaying said reservation coupon to allow
3 said identifying bar code to be read when said
4 reservation coupon travels through an entrance and an
5 exit of said location.

1 3. The method of Claim 1, wherein when only a
2 predetermined percentage of spaces are available at said
3 location, said providing step includes the step of first
4 bidding for one of said spaces.

1 4. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps
2 of:

3 extending said reservation period after said
4 reservation period has begun; and

5 providing an electronic payment for an extension
6 acquired by said extending step.

7 5. The method of Claim 1, wherein said space is a
8 parking space, and said method further comprises the step
9 of selecting a valet option with said reservation
10 request, wherein a valet parks and delivers a vehicle of
11 said customer at a beginning and an end of said
12 reservation period, respectively.

1 6. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the steps
2 of:

3 connecting a customer terminal to a reservation
4 website via the Internet; and

5 interacting with said graphical user interface (GUI)
6 to transact said reservation request.

1 7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step
2 of setting up a customer account with personal and
3 payment information to reduce customer interface time
4 with said GUI when making said reservation request.

1 8. A space reservation system comprising:

2 a database of locations that each provide a
3 plurality of spaces that may be reserved;

4 a graphical user interface that receives a
5 customer's request for a space at one of said locations;

6 an availability utility that determines whether said
7 space is available; and

8 output means for, in response to said space being
9 available, providing said customer with a print-out of a
10 reservation coupon containing information by which access
11 to said location is controlled.

12 9. The system of Claim 8, further comprising a customer
13 terminal on which said GUI is displayed.

14 10. The system of Claim 8, further comprising an
15 auctioning utility that:

16 monitors a number of spaces available at each of
17 said locations; and

18 in response to a reservation request at a location
19 that has less than a predetermine number of spaces
20 available, activates an auction for each of said number
21 of spaces available, wherein each space is reserved to a
22 highest bidder.

1 11. The system of Claim 8, further comprising a server
2 on which said GUI and said availability utility are
3 executed, wherein said server is coupled to said database
4 of locations and periodically updates said database of
5 location.

1 12. The system of Claim 11, further comprising a
2 location monitoring mechanism linked to said server and
3 which monitors an entrance and exit of said location to
4 determine when said space is utilized and provides
5 feedback of a utilization of said space to said server.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein said reservation
coupon includes a bar code readable by a remote bar code
scanner, wherein further said location monitoring
mechanism includes said remote bar code scanner and
monitors an entry into and exit from said location by
said reservation coupon.

1 14. The system of Claim 12, wherein said server
2 automatically updates said database of locations in
3 response to both an acceptance of a reservation request
4 and said utilization.

1 15. The system of Claim 13, wherein, when said
2 utilization exceeds a reservation period, a charge is
3 accrued and billed to said customer.

1 16. The system of Claim 8, further including a season
2 adjusting utility that dynamically increases customer's
3 cost for said space during a high reservation period.

1 17. The system of Claim 8, further comprising an
2 extension utility that allows said customer to extend a
3 reservation request after said reservation period has
4 begun.

1 18. The system of Claim 8, wherein said system is a car
2 parking control system for a terminal parking location,
3 wherein said car parking control system is linked to a
4 flight reservation system and automatically processes a
5 request for said reservation at a terminal parking
6 location for an airline passenger upon selection of a car
7 reservation option from within a flight reservation GUI.

1 19. The system of Claim 8, wherein said location offers
2 open reservation that allows any one of a plurality of
3 spaces within said location to be utilized by a customer
4 with a reservation coupon.

1 20. A computer program product comprising:

2 a computer readable medium;

3 program instructions stored on said computer
4 readable medium for:

5 managing a database of locations that each provide a
6 plurality of spaces that may be reserved;

7 providing a graphical user interface that receives a
8 customer's request for a space at one of said locations
9 and an availability utility that determines whether said
10 space is available; and

11 in response to said space being available,
12 outputting to said customer a printable reservation
13 coupon containing information by which access to said one
14 location is controlled.

15 21. The computer program product of Claim 20, wherein
16 said program instructions further comprise instructions
17 for:

18 monitoring a number of spaces available at each of
19 said locations; and

20 in response to a reservation request for a location
21 that has less than a predetermine number of spaces
22 available, activating an auction for each of said number
23 of spaces available, wherein each space is reserved to a
24 highest bidder.

1 22. The computer program product of Claim 20, further
2 comprising program instructions that control receipt of
3 information from a location monitoring mechanism that
4 monitors an entrance and exit of said location to
5 determine when said space is utilized and provides
6 feedback of a said utilization of said space.

1 23. The computer program product of Claim 20, further
2 including program instructions for implementing a season
3 adjusting utility that dynamically increases customer's
4 cost for said space during a high reservation period.

1 24. The computer program product of Claim 20, further
2 comprising program instructions for executing an
3 extension utility that allows said customer to extend a
4 reservation request after said reservation period has
5 begun.

1 25. The computer program product of Claim 20, wherein
2 said computer program controls a car parking reservation
3 system for parking at an airline terminal wherein said
4 car parking control system is linked to a flight
5 reservation system and said program instructions for
6 controlling said car parking reservation system includes
7 instructions for automatically activating and processing
8 a request for reservation at a terminal parking facility
9 for an airline passenger upon selection of a car
10 reservation option from within a flight reservation GUI.

1 26. A method, carried out by a server communicatively
2 connected to a plurality of clients in a network
3 environment, for managing a parking location having a
4 plurality of separate parking spaces, said method
5 comprising:

6 receiving, from one of said clients, a parking
7 request for said parking location for a specific duration
8 of time between a beginning time and an ending time;

9 accessing a database and determining a status of the
10 parking location during the specific duration of time;

11 sending, over the network to the client, a printable
12 reservation ticket having machine readable information
13 including the beginning time and the ending time and
14 identification information for a user using the client to
15 make the parking request.

16 27. The method of Claim 26 further comprising:

17 receiving a request to extend the duration of time
18 with a new ending time for a parking request; and

19 updating the database with the new ending time.

1 28. The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

2 receiving information generated from the parking
3 location as to an actual time that a car of the user
4 enters and leaves the parking location; and

5 correlating the received information with the
6 identification information read at the parking location
7 from the machine readable information of the reservation
8 ticket used for the car by the user.

11 29. The method of Claim 28, further comprising an
12 automatic billing system based upon the received
13 information for billing a user identified from the
14 identification information an amount based upon the
15 actual time the car entered and left the parking location
16 and based upon whether the time was within a reserved
17 time specified in the reservation or an extension to the
18 reservation.

1 30. A method, carried out by a server communicatively
2 connected to a plurality of clients in a network
3 environment, for managing a parking location having a
4 plurality of separate parking spaces, said method
5 comprising:

6 receiving, from one of said clients, a parking
7 request for said parking location for a specific duration
8 of time between a beginning time and an ending time;

9 accessing a database and determining a status of the
10 parking location during the specific duration of time;
11 and

12 initiating an auction for a parking reservation for
13 the parking location if the status of the parking
14 location indicates a certain level of demand during the
15 duration of time.

1 31. A method, carried out by a server communicatively
2 connected to a plurality of clients in a network
3 environment, for managing a parking location having a
4 plurality of separate parking spaces, said method
5 comprising:

6 receiving, from one of said clients, a parking
7 request for said parking location for a specific duration
8 of time between a beginning time and an ending time;

9 accessing a database and determining a status of the
10 parking location during the specific duration of time;
11 and

12 notifying a valet service to pick up a car at a
13 designated location and to park the car at the parking
14 location if the status of the parking location indicates
15 an availability of one of the separate parking spaces for
16 the duration.